



EPA Makes Grants Available to States to Implement Water Quality Monitoring and Public Notification Programs at the Nation's Beaches

EPA is making almost \$10 million in grants available in 2006 to eligible states to protect public health at the Nation's beaches. These grants are available to coastal and Great Lakes states to help them implement programs to monitor water quality at the beach and to notify the public when water quality problems exist.



Background

Each swimming season, state and local health and environmental protection agencies monitor the quality of water at the Nation's beaches. When bacteria levels in the water are too high, these agencies notify the public by posting beach warnings or closing the beach.

To improve water quality testing at the beach and to help beach managers better inform the public when there are water quality problems, Congress passed the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act (BEACH Act) in October 2000. This Act authorizes EPA to award grants to eligible states, tribes, and territories to develop and implement beach water quality monitoring and notification programs at coastal and Great Lakes recreational waters at beaches. These grants also help states develop and implement programs to inform the public about the risk of exposure to disease-causing microorganisms in the waters at the Nation's beaches.

Funding

In 2006, EPA expects to award \$9,853,100 in grants to eligible states, tribes, and territories for the beach program. For this sixth year of the BEACH Grants, EPA expects to award grants based on an allocation formula to all eligible States and Territories who apply. EPA consulted with states and the Coastal States Organization in 2002 to develop this formula, which considers three factors: 1) beach season length, 2) beach miles, and 3) beach use. EPA used the same formula as was used in 2005, which includes using shoreline miles as a surrogate for beach miles, while EPA evaluates beach length data.

Based on this allocation formula, the size of the Implementation Grant Award ranges from \$150,000 to \$528,410, if all 35 eligible states and territories apply. EPA expects all 35 eligible

governments to apply. If fewer apply or qualify for the grants, then EPA will redistribute available funds to states according to the following principles:

- 1) States that meet the program performance criteria published by EPA in June 2002 (EPA-823-B-02-004) will receive the full amount of funds for which they qualify under the allocation formula.
- 2) States that have not met the requirements for implementation grants may receive grants for continued program development. Any program development grants that the Agency awards will be for the limited purpose of completing work needed to qualify for implementation grants. Therefore, we expect that funding levels for continued program development grants will be lower than the amount described in 1) above.
- 3) EPA may award program implementation grants to local governments in states that have not met the requirements for program implementation.
- 4) EPA may use the grant allocation formula to make additional funds available for implementation grants to states that have met the performance criteria.

If all 35 eligible states and territories apply and meet the performance criteria, the distribution of funds for year 2006 will be:

For the state or territory of:	The year 2006 allocation is:	For the state or territory of:	The year 2006 allocation is:
Alabama	\$262,170	Mississippi	\$257,510
Alaska	\$150,000	New Hampshire	\$204,530
American Samoa	\$302,140	New Jersey	\$277,730
California	\$516,960	New York	\$348,740
Connecticut	\$223,370	North Carolina	\$302,480
Delaware	\$210,750	Northern Marianas	\$303,330
Florida	\$528,410	Ohio	\$223,650
Georgia	\$286,200	Oregon	\$228,780
Guam	\$302,600	Pennsylvania	\$222,530
Hawaii	\$323,020	Puerto Rico	\$328,450
Illinois	\$242,940	Rhode Island	\$212,640
Indiana	\$205,800	South Carolina	\$296,660
Louisiana	\$322,010	Texas	\$382,890
Maine	\$254,730	U.S. Virgin Islands	\$303,180
Maryland	\$269,250	Virginia	\$276,900
Massachusetts	\$254,440	Washington	\$270,320
Michigan	\$278,450	Wisconsin	\$225,270
Minnesota	\$204,270		

EPA has set aside \$50,000 for eligible tribes who may apply to develop a beach program. EPA expects to apportion these funds evenly among all eligible tribes that apply.

How Long Will the Funding and Project Periods Last?

EPA recognizes that the Agency recently issued 2005 grants to states and territories. Because of the short gap between the recent 2005 grant awards and this *Federal Register* notice, EPA expects that States will work with their regional EPA beach contacts to establish appropriate funding and project periods consistent with federal grant regulations.

Who Is Eligible to Apply?

In order to be eligible for BEACH Act grants, states and territories must have coastal and Great Lakes recreational waters next to beaches or similar points of access used by the public. Under the BEACH Act, EPA can also award grants to eligible tribes. To receive BEACH Act grants, tribes, like states and territories, must have coastal and Great Lakes recreational waters next to beaches or similar points of access used by the public. In addition, a tribe must demonstrate that it meets the “treatment in the same manner as a state” criteria contained in section 518(e) of the Clean Water Act. EPA encourages those Tribes with coastal recreation waters to contact their regional Beach Act grant coordinator for further information regarding the application process as soon as possible.

In July 2002, EPA published the *National Beach Guidance and Required Performance Criteria for Grants* (EPA-823-B-02-004) which explains the requirements for states, tribes, and local governments to qualify for implementation grants. You can find this document on EPA’s website at <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches>. You can also get the guidance by writing or calling the Office of Water Resources Center, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Mail Code 4100T, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20460. (202-566-1731) or by sending an e-mail to: center.water-resource@epa.gov.

The BEACH Act authorizes EPA to give a grant to a local government to implement a monitoring and notification program. We may do so only if the Agency finds that the state is not implementing a program that met the requirements of the Act one year after we published performance criteria for beach programs on July 19, 2002. Therefore, July 19, 2004 was the earliest date a local government would have been eligible for a section 406 grants. Local governments may contact their EPA Regional office for further information about BEACH Act grants.

How Does a State or Territory Apply?

Eligible states and territories may get an application from their regional EPA beach contact. These contacts are listed in the *Federal Register* Notice of Availability for the BEACH grants on EPA’s Beach Watch web site at www.epa.gov/ost/beaches/grants.

For More Information

For more information on the BEACH grants, please contact your EPA Regional beach program representative or the Office of Water’s Standards and Health Protection Division at (202) 566-0400.